

Pressure Forces Truman Gestures to Negro People

By CLAUDIA JONES

President Truman's recent appointments of Judge William R. Hastie as governor of the Virgin Islands and R. O'Haha Lanier as minister to Liberia, make it necessary to answer the question as put by a friend: What is Truman's box score where the Negro people are concerned?

Well, let us see. A few weeks ago, the Negro press rocked, with indignation at the resignation of Attorney Charles E. Houston from the FEPC committee because of failure of President Truman to uphold FEPC authority with Capitol Transit Co. Here were the incipient seeds of a break with the Truman Administration on the part of the Negro people, much like the break of labor with the Administration over labor's just demands for wage increases. This very idea was sharply expressed by the Chicago Defender, and subsequently, by other Negro leaders who called for new political realignments along the lines of a third party movement.

SUSPECT PRAISE

Not much later however, there crept into editorials of the same press "praise" and "commendation" for Truman for his appointments, for his pocket veto of the bill returning USES to the states. Likewise there is "praise," which is suspect, from certain Negro leaders such as A. Phillip Randolph and Anna Arnold Hedgeman of the National Council for a Permanent FEPC. Mrs. Hedgeman expresses "deep appreciation" to the President for inclusion of his remarks concerning FEPC legislation in his radio address. A. Phillip Randolph considers that the President "has very clearly" indicated his desire for enactment into law of a permanent FEPC bill.

These leaders reveal their "hat in hand" attitude towards FEPC and towards the man who is pledged to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and the Roosevelt policies of non-discrimination in employment.

Nor is Truman the "man of the hour" as put by one Negro columnist this week. The pressure of the Negro people and labor on FEPC, wage increases, support to the GIs' protest against slow demobilization, etc., is chiefly responsible for Administration efforts to mend its broken fences with the Negro people.

If the Administration has been forced to bow to this pressure, it is because it is becoming stronger than

the pressure of the Bilbos and Ranks.

Such is evidenced in the NNC picket line around the White House, the convening of Negro Republican leaders who put the heat on Herbert Brownell with regard to Republican sabotage of FEPC, the call of Congressman Powell and Councilman Davis for the contemplated Save FEPC Peoples' Delegation to D.C. on Jan. 17.

The Hastie and Lanier appointments represent a victory for the Negro people. They are an Administration retreat before their pressure.

Confirmation of the appointments by the Senate will represent a major battle. But as stated by Councilman Benjamin J. Davis, there is

reason and room to question, whether in view of the reactionary imperialist course being pursued by the Administration, they are not lending themselves to the support of colonialism, of imperialist oppression of the Liberians and the Virgin Islanders.

Truman's box score where the Negro people are concerned remains to be seen, however, on what the Administration will not only say—but do—on FEPC. In this connection, the cue to the future battle for full democracy for the Negro people is continued pressure with their allies around the key issues which face the nation, and particularly FEPC.

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